

## STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

RS29551 / S1313

In 1927, and in response to the federal government attempting to use Priest, Pend Oreille, and Coeur d'Alene Lakes as irrigation storage reservoirs for reclamation of arid lands in the state of Washington, which would have resulted in unpredictable summertime lake water elevations, the legislature enacted Idaho Code § 67-4304, to appropriate water rights in the name of the governor, in trust, for the people of the state of Idaho, for preservation of said lakes for their scenic beauty, health, recreation, transportation, and commercial purposes necessary and desirable for all inhabitants of the state. Idaho law thus recognizes and distinguishes the attributes of all the natural lakes of northern Idaho from southern Idaho storage reservoirs that are operated for priority deliveries of water for irrigation. Since 1927, economies have developed around Priest, Pend Oreille, and Coeur d'Alene Lakes relying on stable summertime water elevations, which are achieved and maintained by consistent operation of dams. This legislation adds language to Idaho Code § 67-4304 to provide certainty that the storage water rights in Priest, Pend Oreille, and Coeur d'Alene Lakes that are partially decreed in the Northern Idaho Water Rights Adjudications, Idaho Code § 42-1406(b), including for the associated dams, shall be administered by the director of the Department of Water Resources or watermaster based on the elevations described in the water rights.

### FISCAL NOTE

If implemented, this legislation will cause no fiscal impact to the state or local governments. This legislation may reduce future costs to the state for administering the storage water right partial decrees from the Northern Idaho Water Rights Associations associated with Priest, Pend Oreille, and Coeur d'Alene Lakes, including partial decrees for the associated dams, as administration to an elevation will not require detailed water accounting that is necessary for southern Idaho irrigation storage reservoirs.

**Contact:**

Teresa Molitor, Avista  
(208) 860-9968

**DISCLAIMER:** This statement of purpose and fiscal note are a mere attachment to this bill and prepared by a proponent of the bill. It is neither intended as an expression of legislative intent nor intended for any use outside of the legislative process, including judicial review (Joint Rule 18).